

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MASSACHUTTES

VICTIM RIGHTS LAW CENTER, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,
et al.,

Defendants.

Civil Action No. 25-11042-MJJ

DECLARATION OF STEVEN SCHAEFER

1. My name is Steven Schaefer. I make this Declaration based on my own personal knowledge, on information contained in the records of the U.S. Department of Education (“Department”), and/or on information provided to me by Department employees.
2. I am currently employed as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy in the Department’s Office for Civil Rights (“OCR”), headquartered in Washington, D.C. I began my service at the Department on February 24, 2025.
3. In my role at the Department, I have the following responsibilities:
 - a. I assist the Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Craig Trainor, with his duties and responsibilities managing and running OCR.
 - b. I advise the Acting Assistant Secretary and senior Department leadership on matters of civil rights policies, including administrative enforcement actions and strategies.
 - c. In my role I keep abreast of legal proceedings directly affecting OCR, its policies, and its operations.
4. I am familiar with the previous declarations submitted by Department Chief of Staff Rachel Oglesby in the cases of *New York v. McMahon*, Case No. 25-10601-MJJ and *Somerville Public Schools v. Trump*, Case No. 25-10677-MJJ, on June 3, 2025, June 10, 2025, June 17, 2025, June 24, 2025, July 1, 2025, and July 8, 2025, the latter two of which included compliance information specific to the preliminary injunction issued by this Court on June 18, 2025 regarding the Department’s Office for Civil Rights (the “OCR Order”), and the further declarations of Rachel Oglesby submitted in this case regarding the OCR Order on July 15, July 22, 2025, July 29, 2025, August 5, 2025, and August 12, 2025, as well as my prior declarations filed in this case on August 19, 2025, and September 2, 2025, and the declaration of David Samberg filed in this case on August 26, 2025. I incorporate herein by reference the statements made in those prior declarations (the “Prior Declarations”). Due to the stay ordered by the United States Supreme Court issued on July 14, 2025, in the

aforementioned *New York* and *Somerville* cases, this declaration addresses compliance activities specific to the OCR Order.

5. I participate as a senior Department official, specifically as an OCR representative, in the ad hoc committee described in the Prior Declarations. Department officials from the ad hoc committee held discussions on September 5, 2025, and September 8, 2025, addressing OCR-specific further reintegration activities required to comply with the OCR Order. By September 9, 2025, the Department:
 - Updated and continued implementing the schedule set forth in the August 19, 2025, Prior Declaration, for the Department to return to active duty, via remote-work status, as compelled by the OCR Order, the approximately 264 OCR employees who received RIF notices on March 11, 2025, with the following details:
 - 27 employees returned to active duty on September 8, 2025 (28 employees were scheduled to return; one tendered voluntary resignation on September 7;
 - Identified within OCR senior leadership the approximately 60 employees scheduled to return to active duty on September 22, 2025;
 - Approximately 60 employees will return to active duty on or about October 6, 2025;
 - Approximately 60 employees will return to active duty on or about October 20, 2025;
 - Approximately 60 employees will return to active duty on or about November 3, 2025.
 - With regard to employees returning on September 22, the Department continued to complete the following logistical tasks:
 - Preparing notification to the employees of the expected return date.
 - Ensuring receipt of updated government-furnished equipment (GFE).
 - Assigning required security and similar online training.
 - Arranging for issuance of replacement PIV cards (personal identity verification).
 - Began to identify the group of employees who will return to active duty on or about October 6, 2025.
 - Continued to pay the salaries and benefits of OCR employees who received RIF notices on March 11, 2025, and have been on paid administrative leave since March 21, 2025, at a cost to the Department of nearly \$1 million per week (less the cost of salaries and benefits of the 27 employees who have now returned to active duty).
 - Ensured that OCR continues to process, investigate, and resolve complaints:
 - From March 11 to September 8, 2025, OCR received 8,325 complaints; opened 543 for investigation; opened 32 directed investigations; dismissed 5,620 complaints consistent with OCR's Case Processing Manual; resolved 125 complaints after investigation concluded insufficient evidence for findings; and resolved 488 complaints with voluntary agreements, OCR-mediated settlements, or technical assistance from OCR to ensure a recipient's digital resources are accessible to students with disabilities.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed in Washington, DC this 9th day of September, 2025.

/s/Steven Schaefer

Steven Schaefer